

Of course, it wouldn't be a Trump budget if it didn't include the fantasy of another \$8.6 billion in funding for the border wall. The fiction that Mexico would pay for the wall has long been debunked, although that is what the President ran on, but it is still amazing that the Trump administration proposes year after year that the American taxpayer pay billions of dollars for a border wall that President Trump said would be completely free.

It is difficult to overstate the callousness of President Trump's budget. The cuts to Medicare, Medicaid, and numerous middle-class programs are devastating but maybe not surprising. This budget will be on the backs of the Republicans. They support President Trump.

The Republican Party's systematic efforts to rip away Americans' healthcare, its continued embrace of the tax cuts for the rich, its refusal to accept science, facts, and the urgent need to address climate change have made cruel and unthinkable budget proposals like this one par for the course with our fellow Republicans. It is sad; it is a shame; and it basically is total hypocrisy because not one single Republican would campaign on these proposals.

JUDICIAL NOMINATIONS

Mr. President, this week the Senate will vote on three controversial nominees, including two circuit court judges: Paul Matey for the Third Circuit and Neomi Rao for the DC Circuit, the second most powerful court in the country.

Mr. Matey's nomination, in keeping with Leader MCCONNELL just ripping apart whatever bipartisanship we have left, has advanced without a blue slip from either home State Senator, Mr. BOOKER or Mr. MENENDEZ. In case it wasn't clear how little Republicans care about this once-vaunted tradition, Mr. Matey has skipped even the courtesy of meeting with Senator MENENDEZ.

Mr. Matey has never made an oral argument before a Federal Court of Appeals—never. He barely has any litigation experience either. He has spent most of his career as a political aide to Governor Christie. Yet he is nominated for a lifetime appointment to a circuit court of appeals, not even a district court, where his qualifications would still be questionable, but to a circuit court.

Ms. Neomi Rao, despite her experience, might even be worse. As the Trump administration's regulatory czar, she has been in charge of rolling back consumer protections, environmental protections, and healthcare protections. So as a nominee for the DC Circuit, which hears cases on Federal regulation, Ms. Rao is hopelessly compromised. Yet she refused to commit to recusing herself from regulatory matters on which she has worked when pressed by Senator FEINSTEIN during the Judiciary hearing.

That is to say nothing of Ms. Rao's alarming views. In past writings, Ms.

Rao has expressed skepticism about climate change, called sexual and racial oppression "myths," and argued that independent Federal Agencies are unconstitutional. Perhaps worst of all, she has implied that sexual assault victims are to blame for the despicable crimes committed against them.

Honestly, where do my Republican colleagues find these people? The majority party always nominates judges that have a particular bent, but the Trump administration's nominees, by and large, are not mainstream conservatives; they are rightwing ideologues, many of whom lack the experience, candor, and moderation that we would expect in a public servant, let alone a lifetime judge. For a few of these judges, the sole qualification is not their judicial experience, not their knowledge or erudition, but they are active members of the Federalist Society.

I know this is what my friend the majority leader cares about: a hard-right bench. He doesn't care about their qualifications; he doesn't care about moderation; he doesn't care about representing middle-class people when he nominates these judges. He is running a conveyor belt of political partisans, many with extremely thin legal resumes, onto the courts. He gets a talking point for his base, but the quality of these nominees degrades the Federal bench and cheapens the cause of justice in America.

I will vote no on both Mr. Matey and Ms. Rao, and I strongly urge my colleagues to do the same.

CHINA TRADE NEGOTIATIONS

Mr. President, finally, on China—the ongoing negotiations with China have been something I have been following closely. Over the past few weeks, there has been a drumbeat of reporting that the Trump administration is poised to accept a weak trade agreement with China.

Last week, the New York Times reported that China's draft new foreign investment law, meant to pacify the United States, would not include a complete end to the forced technology transfers. The most recent published draft made no mention of preventing national government regulators from demanding technology transfers. This morning, the Times reported that China has agreed to few, if any, major restrictions on how it manages its currency.

For years, China manipulated its currency to suit its purposes, typically devaluing the renminbi to prop up its manufacturers. I was the first, with Senator GRAHAM of South Carolina, back in the early 2000s, to point out China's currency manipulation, and it has continued unabated. In recent days the renminbi has been allowed to rise, but, curiously, it fell 10 percent against the dollar after President Trump's announcement on tariffs.

According to the Times, that move alone negated, at least temporarily, the impact of President Trump's latest

round of tariffs. The Chinese have done everything they can to gain advantage over us, to steal our jobs, steal our wealth. They have not played fairly, and now the President, with his tariffs, has them where we would want them.

They need to come to an agreement. But they are hanging tough, and the President's inclinations seem to be, from press reports, to back off so he can get any deal, so the stock market will go up temporarily. Make no mistake about it—in the long run, this will hurt America dramatically. The best paying jobs will be created in China, not here. The ability of the best American companies to compete worldwide will be dramatically curtailed.

It is abundantly clear that China is playing us. They want to give up as little as possible while getting out from under the sting of tariffs.

So I say to President Trump, whom I have praised on his China policies thus far—a lot tougher, a lot better than President Obama or President Bush. I say to President Trump: Do not get played. If you don't achieve what you set out to achieve, namely, the permanent reform of China's most abusive trade practices, then walk away, just as you walked away from North Korea when Chairman Kim would not make real commitments.

President Trump, you must walk away from China if President Xi refuses meaningful and enduring economic reforms. To do otherwise would be to squander maybe the last best chance of putting American workers and businesses on a level playing field with our No. 1 economic competitor.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HAWLEY). Without objection, it is so ordered.

SOCIALISM

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, in thinking about some of the debates swirling about here in Washington, DC, as to whether capitalism or socialism should be a preferred economic model, I recall a story that involves Boris Yeltsin, who went on to become the Russian President, who happened to be in Houston, TX, in 1989, visiting the Johnson Space Center—a very important part of NASA in Houston—when he decided to visit a grocery store in Clear Lake, TX. Though it sounds like it could be, this isn't the beginning of a Wes Anderson film.

It was nearly 20 years ago, in 1989, when the Soviet Union had not yet imploded and when the Berlin Wall was still standing. It would be 2 years before Yeltsin would be forced to take steps to begin to transform the Soviet